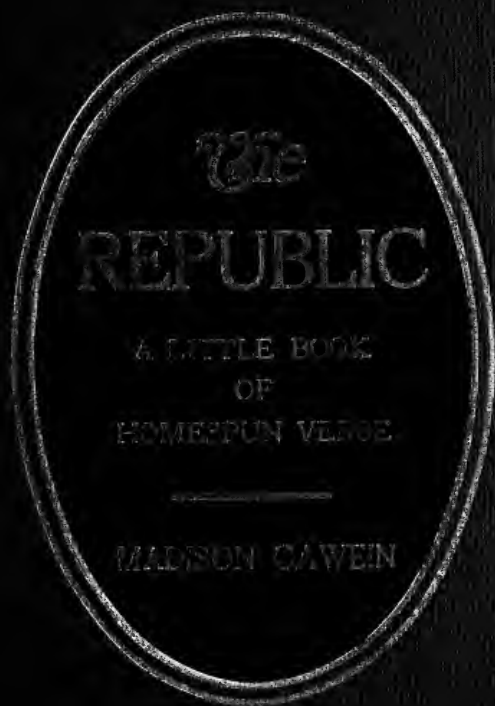


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A LITTLE BOOK
OF
HOMESPUN VERSE

—
MADISON CAVEIN



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THE REPUBLIC

A LITTLE BOOK OF HOMESPUN VERSE

BY

MADISON CAWEIN



STEWART & KIDD COMPANY
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To

DR. HENRY VAN DYKE

WHOSE WORK BOTH IN PROSE AND IN POETRY
HAS DONE SO MUCH TO SUSTAIN THE
HIGH STANDARD OF AMERICAN
LITERATURE DURING THE
PAST QUARTER OF
A CENTURY

FOR permission to reprint most of the poems included in this volume acknowledgment is due "The Forum," in which "The Republic" made its first appearance; "The North American Review," "The Smart Set," "The Youth's Companion," "The Independent," "The Churchman," "The Book News Monthly," and "Lippincott's Magazine."

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THE REPUBLIC

I

THE REPUBLIC

NOT they the great
Who build authority around a State,
And firm on calumny and party hate
Base their ambition. Nor the great are they
Who with disturbance make their way,
Mindful of but to-day
And individual ends that so compel
They know not what they do, yet do it well.
But *they* the great
Who sacrifice their honor for the State
And set their seal
Upon the writing, consecrate,
Of time and fate,
That says, "He suffered for a People's weal:
Or, calm of soul and eye,
Helped to eliminate
The Madness that makes Progress its wild cry,
And for its policy—
Self, a divinity,
That on illusions thrives,
And knows not whither its desire drives
Till on the rocks its headlong vessel rives."

II

God of the wise,
On whom the People wait,
And who at last all evils wilt abate,
Make Thou more keen men's eyes:

Let them behold how Thou at length wilt bring,
From turmoil and confusion now that cling
About the Nation's feet,
Order and calm and peace
With harmony of purpose, wing to wing—
As out of Chaos sprang
Light and its co-mate, Law, when loud Thy
 summons rang—
High instruments of power never to cease,
Spirits of destiny,
Who from their lofty seat
Shall put down hate and strife's insanity,
And all contentions old that eat
The country to the quick:
And Common-Sense, the Lion-Heart, now sick,
Forth from his dungeon cell
Go free,
With Song, his bold Blondél;
And, stretching forth a stalwart arm
To laboring land and sea,
With his glad coming warm
The land to one accord, one sympathy
Of soul; whose strength shall stand
For something more than gold to all the land,
Making more sure the ties
Of freedom and equality
And Progress; who, unto the watchful skies,
Unfurls his banner and, with challenging hand,
Leads on the world's emprise.

III

God of the just and wise,
Behold! why is it that our mortal eyes .
Are not more open to the good that lies
Around our feet?—the blessings in disguise
That go with us about our daily deeds
Attending all our needs?
Why is it that, so rich and prodigal,
We will complain
Of Nature—her whose liberal hand,
Summer and spring and fall,
Pours out abundance on the Land?
Cotton and oil and grain—
O God, make men more sane!
Help them to understand
And trust in her who never failed her due;
Who never camped with Famine and his crew
Or made ally
Of the wild House of old Calamity!
But always faithfully,
Year after generous year,
From forth her barque of plenty, stanch of sail,
Poured big abundance. What did lies avail,
Or what did fear
To make her largess fail? They who descry,
Raising a hue and cry,
Disaster's Harpies darkening the sky
Each month that comes and goes, are they not
less
Of insight than the beasts of hill and field,
Who take no worry, knowing Earth will yield
Her usual harvest—a sufficiency

For all and more; yea, even enough to bless
The sons of Greed, who make a market of lies
And blacken blessings unto credulous eyes,
Turning them curses, till on every hand
They see, as Speculation sees,
God's benefactions—rain, and sun, and snow—
Working destruction in the land,
The camping-ground of old hostilities,
Changing all joy to woe
With visitations of her wrath withal,
Proclaiming her, our mother Nature, foe
Undeviating, to our hopes below—
Nature, who never yet has failed to bless us all.

IV

By the long leagues of cotton Texas rolls,
And Mississippi bolls;
By the wide seas of wheat
The far Dakotas beat
Against the barriers of the mountainland:
And by the miles of maize
Nebraska lays
Like a vast carpet in
Her House of Nights and Days,
Where, glittering, in council meet
The Spirits of the Cold and Heat,
With old Fertility whose heart they win:
By all the wealth replete
Within our scan,
From Florida to where the snows begin,
Made manifest of Nature unto Man—
Behold!
The Land is as a mighty scroll unrolled,

Whereon God writes His name
In harvest: green and gold
And russet making fair as oft of old
Each dædal part He decorates the same
With splendors manifold
Of mountains and of rivers, fruits and flowers;
Sealing each passage of the rubric Hours
With esoteric powers
Of life and love, and all their mystery,
Through which men yet may see
The truth that shall refute the fool that cries,
"God has forgot us and our great emprise!"

V

Of elemental mold
God made our Country, wombing her with gold
And veining her with copper, iron, and coal.
Making her strong for her appointed goal.
High on her eagled peaks His rainbow gleams
Its mighty message: in her mountain streams
His voice is heard: and on the wind and rain
Ride Potencies
And Portents of His purpose, while she dreams
Of great achievements, great activities,
And, weariless of brain,
From plain to busy plain,
And peak to plateau, with unresting hand,
Along the laboring land,
She speeds swift train on train,
Feeling the urge in her of energies,
That bear her business on
From jubilant dawn to dawn,

From where the snow makes dumb
Alaskan heights, to where, like hives of bees,
The prairies hum
With cities; while around her girdling seas
Ships go and come,
Servants and slaves of her vast industries.

VI

And He, who sits above,
And, watching, sees
Her dreams become great actualities,—
Out of His love
Will He continue to bestow
Blessings upon her, even more and more,
Until their store
Shall pass the count of all the dreams we know?
Why heed
The sordid souls that worship Greed?
The vampire lives that feed,
Feast and grow fat
On what they name the Proletariat;
Wringing with blood and sweat,
From forth the nation's muscle, heart, and brain,
The strength that keeps her sane:
They, too, shall have their day and cease to be.
Ignoble souls, who, for a market, set
Before the People's eyes
A scarecrow train
Of fabrications,—rumors, antic lies
Of havoc and calamity,—
Panic appearances of Famine, War,
That for the moment bar
The path of Truth and work their selfish gain.

VII

God of the simple and the wise,
Grant us more light; and lead
The great adventure to its mighty end!
From Thy o'erarching skies
Still give us heed,
And make more clear the way that onward lies.
Not wealth now is her need,
The great Republic's,—Wealth, the child of
Greed,—
Nay, nay! O God, but for the *dream* we plead,
The dream as well as deed,
The Dream of Beauty which shall so descend
From Thee, and with her inmost being blend,
That it shall help her cause
More than all temporal laws. . . .

VIII

Now, for her soul's increase,
And spirit's peace,
Curb the bright dæmon Speed;
Grant her release
From strife; and let the joy that springs
From love of lowly things
Possess her soul and plead
For work that counts for something to the heart,
And grows immortal part
Of life—the work called Art;
And let Love lead
Her softly all her days; with quiet hand
Sowing the fruitful land

With spiritual seed
Of wisdom from which blossoms shall expand
Of vital beauty, and her fame increase
More than the wealth of all the centuries.

IX

God of the wise,
The meek and humble, who still look to Thee,
Holding to sanity
And truth and purpose of the great emprise,
Keep her secure,
And beautiful and pure
As when in ages past Thou didst devise,
Saying within Thy heart, "She shall endure!—
A great Republic!"—Let her course be sure,
O God, and, in detraction's spite,
Unquestionably right;
And in the night,
If night there must be, light a beacon light
To guide her safely through the strife,
The conflict of her soul, with passions rife.
Oh, raise some man of might,
Whose mind shall put down storm and stress of
 life,
And kindle anew the lamp whose light shall burn,
A Pharos, in the storms,
That shall arise and with confusion shake
Foundations of the walls of Civilization:
A pillar of flame, behold,—
Like that of old,
Which Israel followed and its bondage brake,—

Leading each night-lost Nation
To refuge in her arms,—
Freedom's,—away from all the Tyrannies
Of all the Centuries,
Safe on her heart to learn
To hush its heart's alarms.

MIRAGE

Scene, the Arizona Desert, its most desolate part.

HE closed his eyes, yet still could see
The leprous hills loom thirstily;
The mesquit glimmering; and the dust
Of alkali; and, rimmed with rust
Of emerald, a mineral pool
From which his horse had drunk him full.

Now *he* would drink—how good to die
After the torture days gone by!
And so he rose, and through the sage
And sand groped, blind with thirst, and rage
At God, whose hand in hate had wrought
This trap of hell where he was caught.

Now what was this that held him fast?
Had he then reached relief at last,
After long years of heat and hate?
Surely there rose a marble gate,
A towered castle! and the sand
And sage had vanished from the land.

He entered where a fountain fell
On foaming crystal—Like a spell
He caught its freshness. Then his ear
Heard lute-like music drawing near;
And through a rainbowed mist a girl
Beckoned, her beauty like a pearl.

And there two slave-girls on a mat,
Two naked Nubians, drowsing, sat,
Fingering dim-gemmed and nacreous lutes;
He knew at once that they were mutes,
And this the same Seraglio,
Where love had met him lives ago.

The entrance doors he knew were nine:
Three were of agate, red as wine,
And three of lapis-lazuli,
Cerulean-blue as is the sky;
And three of feldspar, veined with gold,
Each leading to her bower of old.

Behind a lattice or a screen
He knew she smiled and watched, unseen:
He felt her presence in the gloom
As one may sense a strange perfume:
And musk of myrrh and sandalwood
Were guides to lead him where she stood.

Once more he 'd see her; hold her fast,
Come back again from out the past;
And, locked in her divine embrace,
Watch, in the heaven of her face,
The ardor of her heart's desire
Change her dark eyes to starry fire.

And then far-off he heard a horn,
And, turning, saw that it was morn—
And there *she* rode, in dawn and dew,
And with her Chevaliers he knew.
The horn led on; he heard its song—
The air he had forgot so long:

“How good,” it sang, “How good at dawn
To ride with her of Roussillon!
To ride with her through dawn and dew
Beneath a heaven gentian-blue,
With hawk on wrist, a madcap crew,—
That wild the horn leads on,—
With her of Roussillon!
To hear the falcons’ jesses ringing
Bells that set the pulses singing!
To see the heron wildly winging,
O’er mountained Roussillon,
Far, towered Roussillon.

“How good to hear by wood and lawn
Our Lady laugh of Roussillon!
Where wild the torrent leaps the crag,
Through mists that on the mountain lag,
As in the forest leaps the stag,—
While clear the horn leads on,
With her of Roussillon!
How good to hear the falcon crying,
To see it strike the quarry flying,
And watch the stricken lapwing dying
By towered Roussillon,
Old, mountained Roussillon!” . . .

The music died. His hot head swung
Upon his neck as wire-hung,
And he awoke to see again
The thirsty peaks, the fevered plain,
Shutting him in with all their hate,
Malignantly, content to wait.

Was it a dream of some old past?
Or would *he* see her there at last?
He sat and thought; no thing occurred.
The desert watched him, never stirred;
Like some gaunt beast with burning eyes
It stared at him with all its skies.

Around he gazed and searched again
The peaks, like blisters on the plain;
No creature moved. The pool nearby
With its green glitter caught his eye.
Yes, he would drink, and know at last
That secret of the long-gone past. . . .

They found him in that poisoned place
With blackened lips and twisted face—
Dead—with seared eyes on something far,
Some unknown thing—perhaps a star—
Or was 't the gold, for which he 'd sought?
The far mirage that turned to naught?

ACCOMPLISHMENT

HOLD to the rapture: let it work
Inward till founts of being fill,
And all is clear that once was murk,
And Beauty's self rise, mirrored still,
Before the mind, that shall devise
New forms of earth to realize.

Let it possess the heart and soul,
And through the two evolve the one,
And so achieve th' immortal goal
Of something great that man has done:
Pouring his thought, his dream intense,
Into the molds of permanence.

Within the compass of extremes
Science and Art their worlds have set,
Wherein the soul fulfills its dreams,
And evermore, without a let,
Swift, eagle-like, free, unconfined,
Soars to new altitudes of mind.

THE WOOD BROOK

LIKE some wild child that laughs and weeps,
Impatient of its mother's arms,
The wood brook from the hillside leaps,
Eager to reach the neighboring farms:
Complaining crystal in its throat
It whimpers a protesting note.

The wildflowers that the forest weaves
To deck it with are thrust aside;
And all the little happy leaves,
That would detain it, are denied:
It must be gone; it does not care;
Away, away, no matter where.

Ah, if it knew what work awaits
Beyond the woodland's peaceful breast!
What toil and soil of man's estates!
What contact with life's sorriest,
A different mind it then might keep,
And hush its frenzy into sleep.

Make of its trouble there a pool,
A dim circumference filled with sky
And trees, wherein the beautiful
Contemplates silence with a sigh,
As mind communicates with mind
Of intimate things they have in kind.

Encircled of the wood's repose,
Contentment then to it would give
The peace of lily and of rose,
And love of all wild things that live;
And let it serve as looking-glass
For myths and dreams the wildwood has.

HAPPINESS

THERE is a voice that calls to me; a voice that cries
 deep down;
That calls within my heart of hearts when Summer
 doffs her crown:
When Summer doffs her crown, my dear, and by the
 hills and streams
The spirit of September walks through gold and purple
 gleams:
It calls my heart beyond the mart, beyond the street
 and town,
To take again, in sun or rain, the oldtime trail of
 dreams.

Oh, it is long ago, my dear, a weary time since we
Trode back the way we used to know by wildwood rock
 and tree:
By mossy rock and tree, dear Heart, and sat below
 the hill,
And watched the wheel, the old mill-wheel, turn round
 on Babbit's mill:
Or in the brook, with line and hook, to dronings of
 the bee,
Waded or swam, above the dam, and drank of joy
 our fill.

The ironweed is purple now; the blackeyed-Susans nod;
And by its banks, weighed down with wet, blooms
 bright the goldenrod:
Blooms bright the goldenrod, my dear, and in the
 mist of morn

The gray hawk soars and screams and soars above the
dripping corn:
And by the pool, cerulean cool, the milkweed bursts
its pod,
As through the air the wild fanfare rings of the hunter's
horn.

The hunter's horn we heard, my dear, that echoed
'mid the rocks,
And cheered the hounds whose belling bay trailed far
behind the fox:
Trailed far behind the fox, dear Heart, whose den we
oft had seen,
A cave-like place within the woods wild-hid in trailing
green:
Old Owllet's Roost, wherein we used to search, with
tangled locks,
For buried gold, where, we were told, the bandit's lair
had been.

O gladness of the long-gone years! O boyhood's days
and dreams!
Again my soul would trace with you the oldtime woods
and streams:
The oldtime woods and streams, dear Heart, and seek
again, I guess,
The buried gold, we sought of old, and find it none
the less
Still in the ground, fast sealed and bound, among the
glooms and gleams,
As long ago we left it so, the gold of Happiness.

THE CALL OF APRIL

APRIL calling, April calling,
April calling me!
I hear the voice of April there
In each old apple tree:
Bee-boom and wild perfume,
And wood-brook melody,—
O hark, my heart, and hear, my heart,
The April Ecstasy!

Hark to the hills, the oldtime hills,
That talk with sea and sky!
Or speak in murmurs with God's winds
Who on their bosoms lie:
Bird-call and waterfall
And white clouds blowing by,
O hark, my heart, O hear, my heart,
The April's cosmic cry!

There runs a whisper through the woods,
The word of bough to bough,
A sound of dead things donning green,
Of Beauty waking now:
Fern-bower and wilding flower,
Each like a prayer or vow,—
O see, my heart, O look, my heart,
Where Earth crowns white her brow!

And far away, and far away,
Yet nearer than she seems,
Look where she takes the oldtime trail
And walks again with dreams:

Bird note and blue remote
And laughter of wild streams,—
O hark, my heart, O hear, my heart,
And follow where she gleams!

Earth has put off her winter garb
Of gray and drab and dun,
And robes herself in raiment green
Of love and laughter spun:
Wood-bloom and wood-perfume
And colors of the sun,—
O hark, my heart, O hear, my heart,
Where her wild footsteps run!

O April, mother of my soul,
Take to your heart your child:
And let him lie a little while
Upon its rapture wild:
Lean close and near, and let him hear
The words that once beguiled,
And on his eyes the kiss again
Of longing reconciled.

O kiss, that fills the fields with flowers
And thrills with green each grove,
Dream down into this heart again
And grow to songs thereof:
Wild songs in singing throngs,
That swift shall mount above,
And, like to birds, with lyric words,
Take Earth and Heaven with love.

THE BRIAR ROSE

YOUTH, with an arrogant air,
 Passes me by:
Age, on his tottering staff,
 Stops with a sigh.

“Here is a flower,” he says,
 “I knew when young:
It keeps its oldtime place
 The woods among.

“Fresh and fragrant as when
 I was a boy;
Still is it young as then,
 And full of joy.

“Years have not changed it, no;
 In leaf and bloom
It keeps the selfsame glow,
 And the same perfume.

“Time, that has grayed my hair,
 And bowed my form,
Retains it young and fair
 And full of charm.

“The root from which it grows
 Is firm and fit,
And every year bestows
 New strength on it.

“Not so with me. The years
Have changed me much;
And care and pain and tears
Have left their touch.

“It keeps a sturdy stock,
And blooms the same,
Beside the selfsame rock
Where I carved my name.

“My name?—I do not know
It is my own.—
’T was carved so long ago,
’T is moss-o’ergrown.”

(He stoops beside the flower.
He feels its need.
And for a thoughtful hour
He gives it heed.

(It beggars him, it seems,
In heart and mind,
Of memories and dreams
Of days once kind.)

“It gives and I must take
Thoughts sweet with pain;
And feel again the ache
Of the all-in-vain.

“If it could understand
All it implies
Of loss to me who planned
In life’s emprise,

“It would not look so fair,
Nor flaunt its youth,
But strip its branches bare,
And die of ruth.

“Ah me! days come and go;
And I am old—
This wild rose tells me so,
As none has told.

“Had it not played a part
In a love long past,
It would not break my heart
With loss at last.”

WHAT THE FLOWERS SAW

SHE came through shade and shine,
By scarlet trumpetvine
And fragrant buttonbush,
That heaped the wayside hush—
And oh!

The orange-red of the butterfly weed,
And pink of the milkweed's plume,
Nodded as if to give her heed
As she passed through gleam and gloom,
heigh-ho!
As she passed through gleam and gloom.

Marybud-gold her hair;
And deep as it was fair;
Her eyes a chicory-blue,
Two wildflowers bright with dew—
And oh!

The flowers knew, as flowers know,
The one she 'd come to find;
They read the secret she hid below
In her maiden heart and mind, heigh-ho!
Her maiden heart and mind.

All day with hearts elate,
They watched him from the gate,
Where in the field he mowed
At the end of the old hill-road—
And oh!

They seemed to see with their petaled eyes
The thing he was thinking of,

And whispered the wind, in secret-wise,
All that they knew of love, heigh-ho!
All that they knew of love.

No matter what befell
Not one wildflower will tell;
Not one, that leaned to look
And see the kiss he took—

And oh!

The things they said in the woodland there
You must ask of the wandering breeze,
Who whispers all news of earth and air,
And is gossip of the trees, heigh-ho!
Old gossip of the trees.

THE BLUE MERTENSIA

THIS is the path he used to take,
That ended at a rose-porched door:
He takes it now for oldtime's sake,
And love of yore.

The blue mertensia, by the stone,
Lifts questioning eyes, that seem to say,
'Why is it now you walk alone
On this dim way?'

And then a wild bird, from a bough,
Out of his heart the answer takes:
"He walks alone with memory now
And heart that breaks.

"And Loss and Longing, witches, who
Usurp the wood and change to woe
The dream of happiness he knew
Long, long ago.

"The faery princess, from whose gaze
The blue mertensia learned that look,
Retaining still beside these ways
The joy it took."

He listens, conscious of no part
In wildwood question and reply—
The wood, from out its mighty heart,
Heaves one deep sigh.

A MAYAPPLE FLOWER

WHAT magic through your snowy crystal gleams!
Your hollow spar, Spring brims with fragrancý;
That, like the cup of Comus, drugs with dreams
This woodland place, so drowsed with mystery.
What miracle evolved you from the mold?
Dreamed you, as 't were, into reality
Out of the Winter's death and night and cold?

Are you a sign, a message, that the Spring
Out of her soul unto the eye reveals?
A symboléd something, telling many a thing
Of beauty she within her breast conceals?
The word significant, that conquers Death;
That through eternity with Nature deals,
As did the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth.

Or, of the rapture of the Earth a part,
Are you a thought that crystallized from dew
Into a flower? Nature, on her heart,—
Bewildered with the hope from whence you grew
Your loveliness,—wears as an evidence
Of immortality; a hint, a clue
To that which still evades our mortal sense.

SOLSTICE

THE ant is busy with its house,
The bee is at its tree;
And by its nest among the boughs
The bird makes melody.
The Day, reluctant still to leave,
Sits crystal at its noon,
Like some sweet girl, with naught to grieve,
Sighing a dreamy tune.
Oh, hark, my heart, and quit your quest!
The song she sighs is one of rest.

The butterfly is on its flower;
The wasp is at its clay;
The wind to bramble lane and bower
Whispers of yesterday.
The Afternoon goes to its close,
With bright attendant states,
Like some calm queen who seeks repose
Behind her palace gates.
Oh, look, my heart, your pining cease!
That way, at last, you shall find peace.

The cricket trills; the beetle booms;
The mole heaves at its mound:
Pale moths come forth like ghosts of blooms;
The firefly goes its round.
The eve puts off her gown of gold,
And for a moment stands

Before her couch, a lamp of old,
The new moon, in her hands.
Oh, heart, go follow where it gleams,
And find again your world of dreams.

The life that wakes at dark comes out:
The spider nimbly weaves;
The bat flits silently about;
The drowsy owlet grieves.
The Night goes stealing to her tryst,
Breathing a fragrant sigh;
One jewel from her starry wrist
Drops down the quiet sky.
Heart, let it be a sign to you
Of love behind the bending blue.

AN IDYLL

HE was a boy, sun-burned and brown,
And she a girl from a neighboring town:
Dark were her eyes and dark her hair,
And her cheeks as red as the ripe peach there:
Dainty and sweet, with a far-away
Look in her eyes like the skies of May.

And it came to pass one afternoon
She walked in the fields; and the month was June:
In the hay-heaped fields and the meadowland
With trees and hills on either hand.
And the lad, who worked on her father's farm,
Had laid him down all tired and warm.
He had been toiling day after day
Mowing and raking and hilling the hay.
And now at last, with his work well done,
He slept by a stack away from the sun.
And she, who came with her young head full
Of thoughts that never are learned in school,—
Young dreams and fancies no girl knows of
Unless she is far on the road to love,—
When she saw him there, where he lay and slept,
A little nearer she cautiously stepped:
Then stood, big-eyed, and looked around,
As if afraid of the one she'd found;
Of him she knew not, who seemed to take
Her heart in a hold she could not break.
He looked so tired and young and hot,
That an impulse swept her, she scarce knew what:

Primitive, wild, that would not wait,
That cried in her blood, "*There lies your
mate!*"

And all was still, save the cricket's shrill,
And the breeze that blew from the wooded hill.
And so she stood with a foot back-drawn,
Like a Nymph that comes on a sleeping Faun:
Then stooped and kissed him, and turned and fled,
Sobbing, her heart of itself adread.

But he who lay in the hay slept on,
And never knew what had come and gone:
The love that had bent to his life and kissed—
That something, called fate, which each has missed.

THE MENACE

THE hat he wore was full of holes,
And his battered shoes were worn to the soles.
His shirt was a rag, held together with pins,
And his trousers patched with outs and ins.
A negro tramp, a roustabout,
Less safe than a wild beast broken out:
And like to a beast, he slouched along
The lane which the birds made sweet with song:
Where the wild rose wooed with golden eyes
The honeybees and the butterflies.
But the bird's glad song and the scent of the rose
Meant nothing to him of the love man knows.
If he heard or heeded 't was but to curse—
Love had no place in his universe.

And there in the lane one met with him—
A girl of ten who was fair and slim:
A farmer's daughter, whose auburn hair
Shone bright as a sunbeam moving there:
And bare of head, as she was of foot,
She passed the tramp with a smiled salute.
She bore in her hand, that was dark with stain,
A pail of berries she 'd picked i' the lane.
Without a word he let her pass
Like a wildrose nodding above the grass.
Innocent, trusting, free from guile,
She met his look with a friendly smile.
And he? He laughed when the child had passed,
And a furtive glance about him cast,—

Then turned and followed. His chance was *now*
To serve the Whiteman out somehow.
He would get even for many a kick.—
Now was his time to turn a trick.

.
Next day they found her, battered and torn,
Her small child's body hid under a thorn.
And, oh! I wonder, good brother of mine,
Why God in His Heaven gave never a sign.
Why she, the lovely, the young, the shy,
Like a beast of the field should have to die:
While he, the hideous, kin to the ape,
God, in His Heaven, should let escape.

BRYAN'S STATION

During the siege of Bryan's Station, Kentucky, August 16th, 1782, Nicholas Tomlinson and Thomas Bell, two inhabitants of the Fort, undertook to ride through the besieging Indian and Tory lines to Lexington, Ky., for aid. It happened also during this siege that the pioneer women of the Fort, when the water supply was exhausted, heroically carried water from a spring, at a considerable distance outside the palisades of the Station, to its inmates and defenders, under the very guns of the enemy.

WE tightened stirrup; buckled rein;
Looked to our saddle-girths again;
Shook hands all round; then mounted.
The gate swung wide: we said, "Good-bye."
No time for talk had Bell and I.
One cried, "God speed!" another, "Fly!"
As out we rode to do or die,
And every minute counted.

The trail, the buffaloes had worn,
Stretched broad before us through the corn
And cane with which it blended.
We knew for miles around the gate
Hid Indian guile and Tory hate.
There was no time to hesitate.
We galloped on. We spurred like Fate,
As morn broke red and splendid.

No rifle cracked. No arrow whirled.
Above us piped a forest bird,
Then two and three together.
We 'd reached the woods. And still no shout
Of all the wild Wyandotte rout
And Shawanese had yet rung out:

But now and then an Indian scout
Flashed here and there a feather.

We rode expecting death each stride
From fallen tree or thicket side,
Where, snake-like, they could huddle:
And well we knew that renegade,—
The blood-stained Girty,—only stayed
His hate awhile before he played
His hand:—that Fiend, who had betrayed
The pioneers of Ruddle.

And when an arrow grazed my hair
I was not startled; did not care;
But rode with rifle ready.
A whoop rang out beyond a ford—
Then spawned the wood a yelling horde
Of devils, armed with tomahawk
And gun. I raised my flintlock's stock
And let 'em have it steady.

Tom followed me. And for a mile
We matched our strength with redskin guile:
And often I have wondered
How we escaped. I lost my gun:
And Tom, whose girth had come undone,
Rode saddleless. . . . The summer sun
Was high when into Lexington,
With flying manes we thundered.

Too late. For Todd at break of day
Had left for Hoy's; decoyed, they say,

By some reported story
Of new disaster. Bryan's needs
Cried "On!"—Although we had done deeds,
We must do more, whatever speeds.
We had no time to rest our steeds,
Whose panting flanks were gory.

Again the trail; rough; often barred
By rocks and trees. Oh, it was hard
To keep our souls from sinking:
But thoughts of those we'd left behind
Gave strength to muscle and to mind
To help us on—on, through the blind
Deep woods, where often we would find
Our hearts of loved ones thinking.

The hot stockade. No water left.
The night attack. All hope bereft
The powder-grimed defender.
The warwhoop and the groan of pain.
All night the slanting arrow-rain
Of fire-brands from the corn and cane:
The fierce defense, but all in vain:
And then, at last, surrender.

But not for Bryan's!—No! Too well
Must they remember what befell
At Ruddle's and take warning. . . .
And like two madmen, dust and sweat,
We rode with faces forward set,
And came to Boone's. The sun was yet
An hour from noon. . . . We had not let
Our horses rest since morning.

Here Ellis heard our news: his men
Around him, back we turned again,
And like a band of lions—
That leap some lioness to aid,—
Of death and torture unafraid,
We charged the Indian ambuscade
And through a storm of bullets made
Our entrance into Bryan's.

And that is all I have to tell.
No more the Huron's hideous yell
Whoops to assault and slaughter.
Perhaps to us some praise is due:
But we are men, accustomed to
Face danger, which is nothing new.
The women did far more for you,
Risking their lives for water.

MOONSHINERS

HOW long we had hid there and listened,
Where the trees let in winks o' the sun,
'Fore their Winchesters glittered and glistened
In the gully below by the run,
I never kep' count. It wuz mornin',
An' my legs wuz stove stiff with the chill
O' the night. But my Lize had the warnin'
An' we knew it wuz up with the still
If we ever give up with our watchin':
The six on us—me an' Bud Roe,
Two Tollivers, Dickon an' Hotchin—
An' the posse nigh twenty or so.

The evenin' before we had reckoned
The sheriff would ride through the glen;
An' it took little less nor a second
To see how we 'd manage it then;
For the valley wound up in a' alley,
Blind-walled with bald bluffs; an' no trees
At its bottom; a trap of a valley,
Scrub thicket not high as my knees.
With me an' the Tollivers watchin'
The rear, an' Bud Roe in the gap,
With Dickon an' Hotch for the scotchin',
We had 'em like rats in a trap.

So we all took a pull at the bottle
Lize brung me last evenin': an' though
We 'd eaten, nor left whut would throttle
A fly, we wuz hungry—I know.

Then a caw come hoarse through the quiet:
We knew it the signal they 'd reached
The gully: an' when they 'd passed by it,
A hawk—we had fixed it—jest screeched:
When a pewee had whistled, we knew it
The signal the posse wuz in,
Safe into the trap. . . . They *would* do it!
An' we—we wuz glad to begin.

A pistol each side an' a rifle
Or two ready loaded. Our height
Would help me to aim jest a trifle
To left an' my pards front an' right.
An' we laid in the rocks, never winkin'—
Jest ready. I heard the dry buzz
O' the grasshoppers; thinkin' an' thinkin'
How lonesome an' solemn it wuz:
When suddent,—I riz in a hurry,—
The laurel whipped back—I could curse!—
Lize could n't git rid o' her worry,
An' woman-like come—fer the worse.

Jest then through the gully an' thicket
I seed the sun glim on the stocks
O' their Winchesters. Slim as a picket
Lize stood by me there in the rocks.
We waited until the last came in.
I lined on the leader an' said,
"Shoot!" hoarsely. We ushered the game in
With the sheriff an' deputy—dead.
It wuz a surprise for 'em—certain!
They saw 't wuz a trap, an' rid back;
But the three in the gap raised a curtain,
With death-dealin' crack upon crack.

An' back to the gully with frightened
Sick faces they galloped, like sin;
An' we, in the rocks, lay an' sighted,
An' hell jest happened agin.
They wuz cornered: they seed it: an' grimly
They turned on their death: an' I leant
With my gun on a rock, an' seed dimly
They rid fer us shootin', hell-bent
Through the smoke fer the thick o' our fire:
Then Lize, who wuz loadin' a gun,
Shrieked somethin' an' jumped—an' a wire
O' blood down her face. She wuz done.

There wuz six on 'em left. But a baby
Could of finished me then, with *her* dead
Instid o' myself! An' it may be
The rest on us there had eat lead
If Bud had n't come with another.
Them three wuz enough fer the rest,
Gittin' off as they did!—I would bother
With nothin', her head on my breast.
But they got me away; an' together
Brung her to the cave with the shot
In her face. May the buzzards now feather
And roost on them there where they rot!

KENTUCKY

Written for the banquet of the New York Society of Kentuckians, held
in the City of New York, February 12th, 1913.

YOU, who are met to remember
 Kentucky and give her praise;
Who have warmed your hearts at the ember
 Of her love for many days!
Be faithful to your mother,
 However your ways may run,
And, holding one to the other,
 Prove worthy to be her sons.

Worthy of her who brought you;
 Worthy in dream and deed:
Worthy her love that taught you,
 And holds your work in heed:
Your work she weighs and watches,
 Giving it praise and blame,
As to her heart she catches,
 Or sets aside in shame.

One with her heart's devotion,
 One with her soul's firm will,
She holds to the oldtime notion
 Of what is good, what ill:
And still in unspoiled beauty,
 With all her pioneer pride,
She keeps to the path of duty,
 And never turns aside.

She dons no new attire
Of modern modes and tricks,
And stands for something higher
Than merely politics:
For much the world must think on,—
For dreams as well as deeds;
For men, like Clay and Lincoln,
And words the whole world reads.

Not for her manners gracious,
Nor works, nor courage of
Convictions, proud, audacious,
Does she compel our love,—
But for her heart's one passion,
Old as democracy,
That holds to the ancient fashion
Of hospitality.

IN HOMESPUN

HOMESPUN

IF heart be tired and soul be sad
As life goes on in homespun clad,
Drab, colorless, with much of care,
Not even a ribbon in her hair;
Heart-broken for the near and new,
And sick to do what others do,
And quit the road of toil and tears,
Doffing the burden of the years:
And if beside you one should rise,
Doubt, with a menace, in its eyes—
What then?—

Why, look Life in the face;
And there again you may retrace
The dream that once in youth you had
When life was full of hope and glad,
And knew no doubt, no dread, that trails
In darkness by, and sighs, "All fails!"
And in its every look and breath
A shudder, old as night, that saith,
With something of finality,
"There is no immortality!"
Confusing faith who stands alone
Like a green tree midst woods of stone,
Who feels within itself a change
Through contact with the dark and strange.

'T were better with *that* Dream, you knew
In youth, to dream all dreams come true,

And follow Love, in homespun clad,
As once you did when but a lad;
And, with the trusting heart of youth,
Listened, and held them for the truth,
The wondertales Life told to you—
Tales, that at last she will make true.

A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW

RAIN and wind and candlelight—
And let us pray a prayer to-night:

For every soul, since life is brief,
Little of trouble and less of grief.

And set a light at the windowpane,
To guide Love home through the night and
rain.

Rain and wind and candlelight—
And what shall we pray again to-night?

For every life, whose way is dim,
The grace of God and trust in Him.

A word, a song, till the tears be dried,
And Faith and Hope sit down beside.

Rain and wind and candlelight—
And one last prayer to pray to-night:

For every heart in the dark and rain
To know its prayer is not in vain:

A door flung wide, and a face aglow—
Love come back from the Long-Ago.

Then let the rain and the wind without
Threaten their worst and rave and shout:

For who will care, though the night is black—
Love to his own has wandered back.

Has wandered back through the rain and
night,
Led home again by *her* candle's light.

VICTORY

THOUGH dead the flower,
That, from her tower,
Love flung you in some perfect hour:

Though quenched the light,
That, on the height,
Faith built, a beacon in the fight:

Though gone the star,
That, seen afar,
Hope lit to guide you through the war:

Yet draw your sword,
And shout your word,
And plunge into the battling horde!

Give Fate the lie!
And, live or die,
Yours, yours shall be the victory!

HOME

I DREAM again I 'm in the lane
That leads me home through night and rain;
Again the fence I see and, dense,
The garden, wet and sweet of sense;
Then mother's window, with its starry line
Of light, o'ergrown with rose and trumpetvine.

What was 't I heard? Her voice? A bird?—
Singing?—Or was 't the rain that stirred
The dripping leaves and draining eaves
Of shed and barn, one scarce perceives
Past garden-beds where oldtime flowers hang
 wet—
Pale phlox and candytuft and mignonette.

The hour is late. I can not wait.
Quick. Let me hurry to the gate!
Upon the roof the rain is proof
Against my horse's galloping hoof;
And if the old gate, with its weight and chain,
Should creak, she 'll think it just the wind and
 rain.

Along I 'll steal, with cautious heel,
And at the lamplit window kneel:
And there she 'll sit and rock and knit,
While on her face the light will flit,
As I have seen her, many a night and day,
Dreaming of home that is so far away.

Upon the pane, dim, blurred with rain,
I 'll knock and call out, "Home again!"
And at a stride fling warm and wide
The door and catch her to my side—
Mother! as once I clasped her when a boy,
Sobbing my heart out on her breast for joy!

MOTHER

OH, I am going home again,
Back to the old house in the lane,
And mother! who still sits and sews,
With cheeks, each one, a winter rose,
A-watching for her boy, you know,
Who left so many years ago,
To face the world, its stress and strain—
Oh, I am going home again.

Yes, I am going home once more,
And mother 'll meet me at the door
With smiles that rainbow tears of joy,
And arms that reach out for her boy,
And draw him to her happy breast,
On which awhile his head he 'll rest,
And care no more, if rich or poor,
At home with her, at home once more.

Yes, I am going home to her,
Whose welcome evermore is sure:
I have been thinking, night and day,
How tired I am of being away!
How homesick for her gentle face,
And welcome of the oldtime place,
And memories of the days that were—
Oh, I am going home to her.

Oh, just to see her face again
A-smiling at the windowpane!

To see her standing at the door
And offering her arms once more,
As oft she did when, just a child,
She took me to her heart and smiled,
And hushed my cry and cured my pain—
I' m going home to her again.

THE ROAD BACK

COME, walk with me and Memory;
And let us see what we shall see:—
A wild green lane of stones and weeds
That to a wilder woodland leads.
An old board gate, the lichens crust,
Whose ancient hinges croak with rust.
A vale; a creek; and a bridge of planks,
And the wild sunflowers that wall its banks:
A path that winds through shine and shade
To a ferned and wildflowered forest glade;
Where, out of a grotto, a voice replies
With a faint *hollo* to your voice that cries:
And every wind that passes seems
A foot that follows from Lands o' Dreams.
A voice, a foot, and a shadow, too,
That whispers of things your childhood knew:
A girl that waited, a boy that came,
And an old beech tree where he carved her
name;
Where still he sees her, whom still he hears
Bidding him come through the long-gone
years. . . .

How oft she beckons your heart and mine
From the farmhouse window trailed deep with
vine,
And porched with roses! where all must know
She used to live in the long-ago.
The farmhouse there at the end o' the lane,
With the sunset twinkling its windowpane;

Where she smiles as she smiled in the Long-ago,
The farmer's daughter you used to know,
Who has not changed to your heart for years,
Though her face you often see through tears:
Who wears her youth, as she did of old,
As a princess weareth a crown of gold.
The little sweetheart, you know for truth,
Who lives for aye in the Land of Youth;
Who never dies; who is always fair,
With eyes of mischief and tomboy hair:
Whom your heart still follows and worships, it
 seems,
Forever and aye in the Land o' Dreams.

THE FATHER

THERE is a hall in every house,
Behind whose wainscot gnaws the mouse;
Along whose sides are empty rooms,
Peopled with dreams and ancient dooms.
When down this hall you take your light,
And face, alone, the hollow night,
Be like the child who goes to bed,
Though faltering and half adread
Of something crouching crookedly
In every corner he can see,
Ready to snatch him into gloom,
Yet goes on bravely to his room,
Knowing, above him, watching there,
His father waits upon the stair.

A BABY

WHY speak of Rajah rubies,
And roses of the South?
I know a sweeter crimson—
A baby's mouth.

Why speak of Sultan sapphires
And violet seas and skies?
I know a lovelier azure—
A baby's eyes.

Go seek the wide world over!
Search every land and mart!
You 'll never find a pearl like this—
A baby's heart.

A SONG OF CHEER

BE of good cheer, and have no fear
Of Fortune or Tomorrow:
To Hope's low whisper lend an ear
And turn away from Sorrow.

Time out of mind the soul is blind
To things God sends as blessings:
And Fortune often proves unkind
Merely in foolish guessings.

Within the soul we bear the whole
Of Hell and also Heaven;
And 'twixt the two is set the goal
Of dreams our lives have driven.

What counts above all deeds is Love,
And Friendship, that, remember,
In heart-beats keeps Life's record of
Its April and December.

To every one come rain and sun,
And calm and stormy weather:
What helps is not what Life has done,
But Life and Love together.

Of sun and rain and joy and pain
The web of Life is woven;
And ever through it runs the skein
Of Hope, with strand uncloven.

Now high in air it glitters fair;
Now dims beyond divining;
But still the thread winds golden there,
Although no longer shining.

Be of good cheer and have no fear
Of any care or sorrow;
The clouds at last will disappear,
And the sun will shine tomorrow.

LITTLE MESSAGES OF JOY AND HOPE

I

TAKE HEART

TAKE heart again. Joy may be lost awhile.
It is not always Spring.
And even now from some far Summer Isle
Hither the birds may wing.

II

TOUCHSTONES

HEARTS, that have cheered us ever, night and day,
With words that helped us on the rugged way,
The hard, long road of life—to whom is due
More than the heart can ever hope to pay—
Are they not touchstones, soul-transmuting true
All thoughts to gold, refining thus the clay?

III

FORTUNE

FORTUNE may pass us by:
Follow her flying feet.
Love, all we ask, deny:
Never admit defeat.
Take heart again and try.
Never say die.

IV

BE GLAD

BE glad, just for to-day!
O heart, be glad!
Cast all your cares away!
Doff all that 's sad!
Put off your garments gray!
Be glad to-day!

Be merry while you can;
For life is short—
It seemeth but a span
Before we part.
Let each maid take her man,
And dance while dance she can:
Life 's but a little span—
Be merry while you can.

V

CARPE DIEM

BLOW high, blow low!
No longer borrow
Care of tomorrow:
Take joy of life, and let care go!

VI

JOY SPEAKS

ONE with the Heaven above
Am I—its bliss:
Part of its truth and love,
And what God is.

I heal the soul and mind:
I work their cures:
Not Grief, that rends Mankind,
But Joy endures.

VII

FOR THE OLD

THESE are the things I pray Heaven send us still,—
To blow the ashes of the years away,
Or keep aglow forever 'neath their gray
The fire that warms when Life's old house grows chill:
First Faith, that gazed into our youth's bright eyes;
Courage, that helped us onward, rain or sun;
Then Hope, who captained all our deeds well done;
And, last, the dream of Love that never dies.

THE DESIRE OF THE MOTH

WOMAN 's a star, a rose;
Man but a moth, a bee:
High now as heaven she glows,
Low now as earth and sea:
Star of the world and rose,
Clothed on with mystery.

Ever a goal, a lure,
Man, for his joy and woe,
Strives to attain to her,
Beating wild wings below,
Dying to make him sure
If she be flame or snow.

EXPERIENCE

THREE memories hold us ever
With longing and with pain;
Three memories Time has never
Been able to restrain;
That in each life remain
A part of heart and brain.

The first 's of that which taught us
To follow Beauty still;
Who to the Fountain brought us
Of ancient good and ill,
And bade us drink our fill
At Life's wild-running rill.

The second one, that 's driven
Of anguish and delight,
Holds that which showed us Heaven,
Through Love's triumphant might;
And, deep beneath its height,
Hell, sighing in the night.

The third—none follows after:
Its form is veiled and dim;
Its eyes are tears and laughter,
That look beyond the rim
Of earth and point to Him,
Who rules the Seraphim.

LOVE'S CALENDAR

THE Spring may come in her pomp and splendor,
And Summer follow with rain and rose,
Or Fall lead in that old offender,
Winter, close-huddled up in snows:
Ever a-South the Love-wind blows
Into the heart, like a vane a-sway
From face to face of the girls it knows—
But which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

If Lydia smile or Maud look tender,
Straight in your bosom the gladness glows;
But scarce at her side are you all surrender,
When Gertrude sings where the garden grows:
And your heart is a-bloom mid the blossoming rows,
For her hand to gather and toss away,
Or wear on her breast, as her fancy goes,
But which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

Let Helen pass, as a sapling slender,
Her cheek a berry, her mouth a rose,—
Or Blanche or Laura—to each you render
The worship due to the charms she shows:
But Ruth 's a poem when these are prose;
Low at her feet your life you lay;
All of devotion to her it owes,—
But which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

How can a man of his heart dispose
When Bess and Clara, and Kate and May,
In form and feature no flaw disclose,—
And which is the fairest it 's hard to say.

THE FOUNTAIN OF LOVE

THE source of laughter lies so near to tears,
And pain to rapture, that one fountain flows
From forth the two—Love's; in whose deeps appears
The image of the Heaven each man knows.

HAPPINESS

AROUND its mountain many footpaths wind,
But only one unto its top attains;
Not he who searches closest, takes most pains,
But he who seeks not, that one way may find.

ADVERSITY

A BARREN field o'ergrown with thorn and weed
It stays for him who waits for help from God:
Only the soul that makes a plough of Need
Shall know what blossoms underneath its sod.

LOVE AND THE SEA

LOVE one day, in childish anger,
Tired of his divinity,
Sick of rapture, sick of languor,
Threw his arrows in the sea.

Since then Ocean, like a woman,
Variable of nature seems:
Smiling; cruel; kind; inhuman;
Gloomed with grief and drowned in dreams.

LOYALTY

TO Friendship drink, and then to Love,
And last to Loyalty!
The first of these were not enough
Without the last, through whom we prove
That Love is Love, and right enough
What Friendship's self may be.
So here 's to Loyalty!

A sword he wears, but never a mask,
So all the world may see.—
Let Friendship set him any task,
Or Love—no question doth he ask,
But draws his sword and does his task,
And never takes a fee.
So here 's to loyalty!

A TRIED FRIEND, A TRUE FRIEND

A FRIEND for you and a friend for me,
A friend to understand;
To cheer the way and help the day
With heart as well as hand:
With heart as well as hand, my dear,
And share the things we 've planned—
A tried friend, a true friend,
A friend to understand!

A friend for you and a friend for me,
A friend to hear our call,
When, wrong or right, we wage the fight
With backs against the wall!
With backs against the wall, my dear,
When hope is like to fall—
A tried friend, a true friend,
A friend to hear our call!

A friend for you and a friend for me,
To share with us that day
When our ship comes back and naught we
lack
Of all for which men pray!
Of all for which men pray, my dear,
That long has gone astray—
A tried friend, a true friend,
To share with us that day!

Oh, side by side, on roads untried,
Two souls may better speed

Than one who goes the road he knows
With none to give him heed!
With none to give him heed, my dear,
And help when there is need—
A tried friend, a true friend,
A friend, a friend indeed!

SO MUCH TO DO

THE face of the world is a homely face,
And the look of the world unkind,
When harsh on your arm a hand it lays
And bids you into the grind,
That 's little to your mind, my dear,
That 's little to your mind.
But it 's work that counts in the world, you see;
Not what we dream, but do:
For the dreamer of dreams, whatever he be,
If he 'd have his dreams come true,
Must be a workman, too, my dear,
Must be a workman, too.

So much to do; so much to know;
So much that life would shirk!
But each is one of a hive below,
The world's great Hive of Irk,
Where each must do his work, my dear,
Each one must do his work.
A song, a look, a word of cheer,
Will help more than a sigh!
For this is the law of the hive, my dear,
That every bee must try, my dear,
And all the drones must die, my dear,
That all the drones must die.

Oft-times it seems that the end is far,
And the work we do, in vain;
That night will never reveal a star,
And day bring only rain,

To trouble our hearts again, my dear,
To trouble our hearts again.
But ever the stars are shining there
With ever the old regard;
And be it foul, or be it fair,
However long debarred,
All work has its reward, my dear,
All work has its reward.

Could summer come without the rose?
Or morn without the sun?
And thus shall toil bring soul's repose
To each and every one,
Whose work at last is done, my dear,
Whose work at last is done.
For the face of the world is a homely face,
But the look in its eyes is kind
To him who sets his heart's brisk pace
To the work he has in mind,
And turns not with the wind, my dear,
And turns not with the wind.

IN THE FOREST OF LOVE

WHAT sighed the Forest to the nest?

"So young, so old,

Love,

Help me to mold

This life I hold."—

What said the bird,

That harked and heard?

"Below, above,

Love, love is best.—

Take heed, my Life, and quit thy quest.—

The meaning of Love is rest."—

So spake the bird.

What cried the Nightwind to the trees?—

"Thou dream of Earth,

Love,

Make me of worth

In death and birth!"—

What said the wood

Stark-still that stood?—

"Below, above,

Give me increase.

Take heed, my Heart! thy sighings cease.

The meaning of Love is peace."

So spake the Wood.

What sobbed the Earth in deep and height?—

"O Song of Songs,

Love,

*Unloose my thongs,
And right my wrongs!"—*
What said the Clod,
That dreamed of God?—
*"Below, above,
Prisoner of Night,
Spirit, lift high thy taper-light!—
The meaning of Love is might."—*
So spake the Clod.

LOVE, THE SONG OF SONGS

OVER the roar of cities,
Over the hush of the hills,
Mounts ever a song that never stops,
A voice that never stills.

Epic-loud as the sea is,
Lyric-low as the dew,
It sings and sings a soul into things
And builds the world anew.

Dauntless, deathless, stern but kind,
Bold and free and strong,
It sweeps with mastery man's mind,
And rolls the world along.

From soul to soul it wings its words,
And, lo, the darkness flies;
And all who heed that song of songs
View Earth with other eyes.

New eyes, new thoughts, that shall go on
Seeing as Beauty sings,
Until the light of the farthest dawn
Shall fold its rainbow wings.

JOY'S MAGIC

JOY'S is the magic sweet,
That makes Youth's pulses beat,
Puts music in young feet,
The old heart hears, the sad heart hears,
that 's near it:
And Joy's the pleasant pain,
That holds us, heart and brain,
When Old Age, sound and sane,
With memories nears, long memories nears
the spirit.

Joy's is the witchery rare,
That on the face of Care
Puts smiles; and rapture where
Love holds her breath, her heart's wild
breath, to still her:
And Joy it is that plays
On Time's old lute of days
As Life goes on her ways
With thoughts of Death, gray thoughts of
Death, that chill her.

THE BEST OF LIFE

WITH soul self-blind
Do n't struggle on merely at last to find
The best of life, the dream, is left behind.

Why desperately
Struggle and strive? after long years to see
Substance alone has no reality.

To find, alas!
The starry glitter in the mountain pass,
The light you climbed for is no star, but glass.

Help, one and all!
Dreamers we need, not workmen, for the wall—
The Tower of Beauty that shall never fall.

JOY

WHAT were this life without her?
Joy, whose young face is sweet
With dreams that flit about her,
And rapture wild of feet!
With hope, that knows no languor,
And love, that knows no sighs,
And mirth, like some rich anger,
High-sparkling in her eyes.

Come! bid adieu to Sorrow;
And arm in arm with Joy,
We 'll journey towards Tomorrow,
And let no Care decoy
Our souls from all clean Pleasures,
That take from Time's lean hand
The hour-glass he treasures,
And change to gold its sand.

THE ROSE OF HOPE

THE Rose of Hope, how rich and red
It blooms, and *will* bloom on, 't is said,
Since Eve, in Eden days gone by,
Plucked it on Adam's heart to lie,
When out of Paradise they fled,
With Sorrow and o'erwhelming Dread,
It was this flower that comforted,
This Rose of Hope, that can not die.
God's Rose of Hope.

When darkness comes, and you are led
To think that Hope at last is dead,
Take down your Bible; read; and try
To see the light; and by and by
Hope's rose will lift again its head—
God's Rose of Hope.

HOPE ON

HOPE on, dear Heart, and you will see
The walls of worry fade and flee;
And sane of soul and sound of mind,
You 'll go your way of life and find
The paths, once barren, suddenly
In blossom; and from Arcady
The summer wind blow sweet and kind—
Hope on, dear Heart.

Think what it 'd mean to you and me—
This life—if Hope should cease to be!
If Hope should die—what doubts would blind!
What black despairs go unconfined!
What sorrows weight us utterly!
Hope on, dear Heart!

HOPE

WITHIN the world of every man's desire
Two things have power to lift the soul above:
The first is Work, who dons a mean attire;
The other, Love, whose raiment is of fire.
Their child is Hope, and we the heirs thereof.

A SONG OF CHEER

CHEER, though you part at morn!
Cheer, though you never part:
Sigh not, nor look forlorn;
Never lose heart!
For, to the hope you don,
Face that your soul puts on,
Whether in sun or storm,
Will the world's face conform.
Sing from the start.
Never lose heart.

WORK

WHAT though the heart be tired,—
The heart, that long aspired,—
And one high dream desired,
Beyond attainment's scope;
Beyond our grasp; above us;
The dream we would have love us,
That will know nothing of us,
But merely bids us hope.

Still it behooves us never
From love and work to sever,
To hold to one endeavor,
And make our dream our care:
For work, at dawn and even,
Shapes for the soul a heaven,
Wherein, as strong as seven,
Can enter no Despair.

Work, that blows high the fire
Of hope and heart's desire,
And sings and dreams of higher
Things than the world's regard:
Work, which to long endeavor,
And patient love, that never
Seems recompensed, forever
Gives, in its way, reward.

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

THEY are the wise who look before,
Nor fear to look behind;
Who in the darkness still ignore
Pale shadows of the mind.

Who, having lost, though loss be much,
Still dare to dream and do:
For what was shattered at a touch
It may be mended, too.

The House of Life hath many a door
That leads to many a room;
And only they who look before
Shall win beyond its gloom.

Who stand and sigh and look behind,
Regretful of past years,
No room, of all those rooms, shall find
That is not filled with fears.

'T is better not to stop or stay;
But set all fear aside,
Fling wide the door, whate'er the way,
And enter at a stride.

Who dares, may win to his desire;
Or, failing, reach the tower,
Whereon Life lights the beacon-fire
Of one immortal hour.

CORNCOB JONES

An Oldham-County Weather Philosopher.

“Who is Corncob Jones?” you say.
 Beateningest man and talkingest:
Talk and talk th’ enduring day,
 Never even stop to rest,
Keep on talking that a-way,
 Talk you dead, or do his best.

We were there in that old barn,
 Loafing ’round and swapping lies:
There was Wiseheart, talking corn,
 Me and Raider boosting ryes,
When old Corncob sprung a yarn
 Just to give us a surprise.

“Why,” says he, “the twelvth of May
 ’Bout ten year ago, why I
Rickollects it to the day,
 By statistics hit wuz dry,
But hit *must* have rained, I say,
 ’Cause—well, I remember why.

“Fer that night it ’gin to blow
 And to rain, an’ rained a week;
When hit stopped hit ’gun to show
 Here an’ there a clearin’ streak,
Then set in to sleet an’ snow—
 Blamededst weather! simply freak!

“An’ the fruit wuz killt; the corn,
Gin’ral, an’ the gardin truck.—
That ’s experience, an’ no yarn.
You can’t put hit down to luck,
But to Natur’, whar we larn
Common sense, we do, by Huck!

“Why, as I have said to-fore,”
(Here he aimed a streak of brown
At a hornet on the floor,
Got him too) “you put hit down
To experience, nothin’ more,—
Whut they call hit there in town.

“Natur’ jest rubs in the thing—
Jest won’t let a man ferget;
Keeps hit up spring arter spring—
Why?—Jest ’cause, now you kin bet,
Blamed blackberries bloom, by Jing!
They jest need the cold an’ wet.

“Every time the twelvth o’ May
Cums around, hit ’s bound to rain,
Almost to the very day,
Then hit turns an’ snows again.
That ’s experience, I say,
Whut we gets here, in the main.”

“Talkin’ ’bout experience—
It don’t help so much,” I said;
“Not as much as common sense.”—
Here old Corncob shook his head,
Spat and said, “Well that depen’s
On whut common sense is, Ned.”

Then old Wiseheart says, says he,
"Common sense is somethin' *more*.
Common sense comes nat'rally.
Nothin' helps *hit*, that I 'm shore;
But *hit* helps the one, you see,
That 't was borned with, rich er poor."

Then says Corncob, "Talkin' now
Of experience.—*That* wuz what
We wuz talkin' 'bout.—Somehow
You got stalded—missed the spot,—
Barbwired both yerself an' plough.—
An' ye have n't proved a jot.

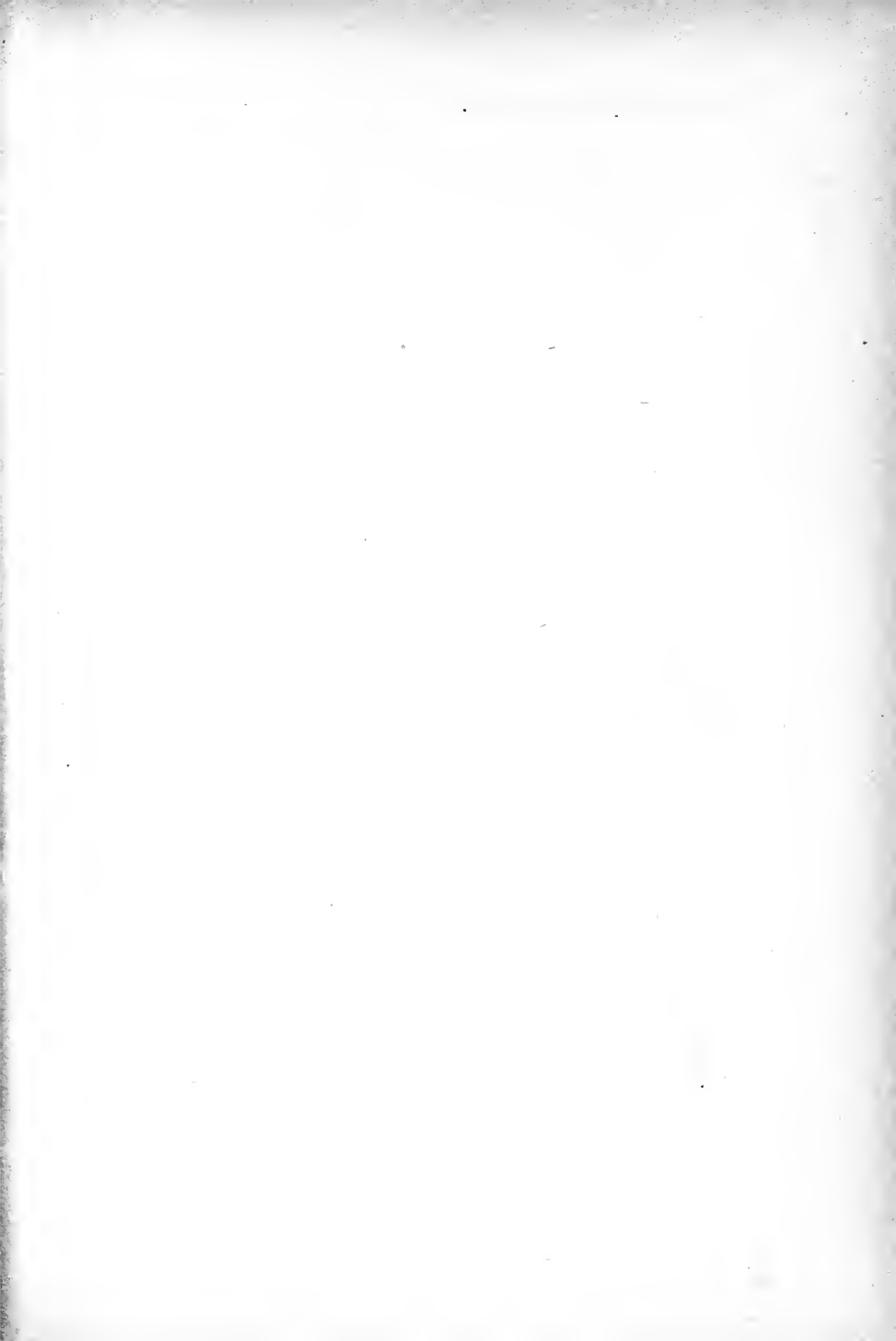
"You can't git along, you know,
'Thout experience.—Whar 'd we be,
If we missed hit?—Helps *me* so
I kin reckin, acktually,
When hit 's goin' to rain er snow,
Er turn hot er cold;" says he.

"Jest by thinkin' back, by Jack!
Hit 's not whut the weather *is*,
But whut hit wuz *oncet*, long back
In the times whut 's gone.—Gee whiz!
No man needs an almanack
If he only notices.

"Weather?—Why, sirs, summer er fall
We kin lay hit by the heels.
Hit cums easy, natural,
Jest like settin' down ter meals.
Jest take *notice*, *that* is all.
Don't rely on how hit *feels*.

“That ’s experience.—Larn to know
Whut is whut, an’ then take heed.
So it cums we reap an’ sow
Jest accordin’ as we ’ve seed
How ’t wuz done long years ago,
An’ so profit;—that ’s my creed.”

Blamededst man you ever met,
This old Corncob. Had a way
Of convincing you, you bet,
By just facts, as you might say;
Tell you when ’twas dry or wet,
And what ’t would be to the day.







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